



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

National  
Agricultural  
Statistics  
Service

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Washington, DC  
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August 14, 2008

TO: Nancy Hirschhorn  
Chief  
Grant Management Branch  
Foreign Agricultural Service

FROM: Larry Sivers  
Director  
International Programs Office

SUBJECT: Proposed Emerging Markets Program FY 2009 Funding of NASS  
International Statistical Cooperation Projects, MEXICO

#### **GENERAL:**

This request is for a one-year follow on to the Mexico Agricultural Statistics Improvement Project that ended in 2007. The success achieved under this project was significant, and expansion of the efforts by the Mexicans to transfer responsibility for agricultural statistics programs to the state offices along with improved methodology is necessary to complete the effort. They are using the NASS model for field office responsibility to realign the Mexican agricultural statistics system. The proposal that follows details those plans.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

The project is oriented toward integration of all national and local agricultural information systems. This plan will provide producers and anyone participating in Mexican agricultural activity and policy fully integrated information for better decision making.

NASS has utilized EMP funding to provide technical assistance and training to improve Mexico's capability to provide accurate, timely and relevant statistics on agriculture. The main provider of agricultural information in Mexico is the Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Food and Fisheries (SAGARPA).

One of the SAGARPA goals is to improve the methodologies and infrastructure to move more of the statistical responsibilities to the Mexican states. The NASS role has been, and would continue to be, to provide technical assistance and guidance to meet this goal. Accurate, timely and relevant statistical information on agriculture is vital to U.S. agricultural interests in development of market strategies for Mexico.



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**AGRICULTURE INFORMATION SYSTEM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING  
PROJECT IN MEXICO.**

Proposal Date: August 14, 2008

The project is proposed by:

National Agricultural Statistics Service,  
United States Department of Agriculture  
Washington, D.C. 20250

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**I. PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION.**

This project would further develop and implement an approach to improve the capability of the Mexican government to develop accurate and timely statistics for the country's agriculture.

**II. RATIONALE.**

USDA/NASS has an extremely effective and influential relationship with the organizations that provide statistics on Mexican agriculture. NASS has focused its efforts on the personnel and procedures of the Agricultural and Fisheries Information Service (SIAP) within the Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Food and Fisheries (SAGARPA). The Mexicans recognized the need to change their methods and procedures in order to improve the quality and timeliness of their agricultural data.

One of the SAGARPA goals is to improve the methodologies, infrastructure, and to move more of their statistical responsibilities to the Mexican state offices. One of the NASS roles has been, and would continue to be, to provide technical assistance and guidance to meet this goal.

The availability of unbiased and timely data is necessary for efficient functioning of agriculture markets. Agricultural statistics must be timely and accurate to be used effectively. The government and private sector need improved data and information to make informed decisions related to the agricultural sector.

The capability to perform commodity situation and outlook reporting and economic and policy analysis is necessary for a market economy. To effectively perform these functions, accurate data that are released to the public on a timely basis is needed, both by the Mexican and the U.S. agricultural communities. The magnitude of the agricultural sector in Mexico can have a major impact on U.S. agricultural markets and producers. Increased availability and timeliness of Mexican agricultural information and an understanding of the quality of that data are critical to U.S. agricultural interests.

### **III. PROJECT PARTICIPANT IDENTIFICATION.**

This project would work extensively with the Agricultural and Fisheries Information Service (SIAP) within The Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Food and Fisheries (SAGARPA) which has responsibility for agricultural statistics in Mexico.

#### **Institutional Capability:**

As the statistical agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) has as its mission “to provide timely, accurate and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture.” NASS has also been helping to establish and improve agricultural statistics programs in countries around the world for nearly 60 years.

NASS specialists provide technical assistance and training on a reimbursable basis in all aspects of statistical surveys, censuses and data systems. The institutional relationships established between NASS and counterpart organizations, which generally continue long after projects are completed, have been mutually beneficial for understanding and addressing improvement issues.

With a total staff of more than 1300 employees, a large portion of which are professionals experienced in various aspects of census and survey work, NASS can draw from a large and diverse set of skills to support international projects. NASS is the United States’ only source of a large permanent staff experienced in the practical application of the technology and latest operational developments in the field of agricultural statistics.

#### IV. RESOURCES REQUIRED.

The amount of resources identified in this proposal is for a one year project continuation. The effort to establish a credible and improved system in Mexico is underway and showing great promise. Continued effort to take advantage of these changes is necessary to ensure complete implementation of needed and significant improvements.

This support will be for NASS experts' travel to Mexico to work with counterparts and travel expenses for one Mexican team's training in the U.S., with costs reimbursed at U.S. Government travel allowance rates.

#### BUDGET NEEDS:

ITEM	Annual Amount Amount (\$000)
Salaries	0
Travel	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>

In addition to the resources provided from the U.S. side for technical assistance, significant resources in the way of National staff, regional staff, and local staff, travel expenses, data collection and processing cost will be provided by the Mexican collaborating agencies.

#### V. IMPLEMENTATION.

The following activities will be undertaken:

- Assistance with the implementation of establishment of a state statistical office structure, with standardization of methodology and operations of statistical survey work by the State Offices of Information for Sustainable Rural Development (OEIDRUS).
- Training on uses of area sampling frames, list sampling frames, and multiple frames for conduct of sample surveys of farm operators for agricultural surveys. Specifically in the use of mathematical formulae and computer software to develop the frames, to select unbiased and efficient samples, to edit the data collected from the surveys and to expand and summarize the survey data correctly.

- Continue support for the construction and sampling of area frames through assistance for a new frame and sample in the Mexican state of Jalisco.
- In addition to technical assistance to the collaborative institutions in Mexico, training seminars in-country on various aspects of the statistics system, as well as study a tour in the United States with NASS, would be undertaken

## **VI. KEY CONTACTS.**

NASS management of the project would be under the guidance of Larry Sivers, Director, International Programs, NASS. In-country contacts are Mr. Juan Manuel Galarza, Director General, SIAP/SAGARPA.